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FRENCH'S ACTING EDITION

WHAT CHARITY COVERS

(DAVID GARROW).

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WHAT CHARITY COVERS

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By

DAVID GARROW

Author of "Patty Packs a Bag"

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WHAT CHARITY COVERS

Produced on April 7, 1911, at the Dalston Theatre, London with the following cast of characters :—

CALVERLEY WHITE (a young accountant)

FENNER (man-servant)

LADY MARY THORNICROFT (middle-aged woman of fashion)

LORNA THORNICROFT (her daughter)

SCENE.—*Drawing-room of* LADY MARY THORNICROFT'S *flat in Victoria Street.*

TIME.—*Afternoon in July.*

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Any costumes or wigs required in the performance of " What Charity Covers " may be hired or purchased reasonably from Messrs. Chas. H. Fox, Ltd., 27, Wellington Street, Strand, London.

WHAT CHARITY COVERS

SCENE.—*Pretty drawing-room in London flat. Entrance at back, window up* R., *sofa below* R. *Entrance* L.U.E. *and writing-table down* L. *Ottoman* C.

(LORNA *discovered, reading. Enter* FENNER *with letter on salver.*)

FENNER. An express letter for her ladyship, Miss Lorna.

LORNA (*takes letter*). Express! Oh well, mamma will be in directly. It's nearly four o'clock.

(*Bell rings.*)

There she is, I dare say.

(*Exit* FENNER *at back.*)

(LORNA *turns over letter with a worried expression.*)

LADY MARY (*outside*). Express! Oh, very well.

(*Enter* LADY MARY, *smiling, fussy, laden with parcels. She is beautifully dressed, with a fluffy, juvenile effect.*)

Where's this letter Fenner tells me about?

LORNA. Here it is, mamma. I do hope it isn't another of those dreadful tradesmen!

LADY M. (*laughing*). Well, even the wicked tradesmen have ceased from troubling for the last week.

LORNA. Yes. I was quite dreading the effect of the usual worry upon you after the fatigues of the bazaar.

LADY M. Oh, don't talk about the bazaar. I still get up raffles in my sleep. (*She has put down the parcels and opened letter. Frowns.*) Why, what's this? That brute, Sir Bertram Fletcher, says he's not satisfied with the statement of the bazaar accounts. And he's sending an accountant to me for more details. (*Puts down letter indignantly.*) More details indeed! I'm sure I put down everything I could think of.

LORNA (*annoyed*). I knew something of that sort was coming!

LADY M. (*quickly*). You did?

LORNA. Yes. I met Margery Anning this morning, and she says everybody is awfully disappointed not to have cleared off the whole debt.

LADY M. That's what always happens. You work your head off, make a big success, and then people grumble!

LORNA. It's because it was such a success they say the four thousand pounds ought to have been cleared.

LADY M. (*casting up her eyes*). As if four thousand pounds was *ever* cleared by *any* bazaar.

LORNA. That's what I told them.

LADY M. A bazaar's a success if there isn't a loss!

LORNA. Yes.

LADY M. It's their having Sir Bertram Fletcher for president has done this.

LORNA. An old busybody!

LADY M. I'll never be on a managing committee under him again.

LORNA. I told them that too. But they said you'd have to be, because you were the only woman in London who could organize these things.

LADY M. (*plaintively*). And these are the thanks I get! An accountant indeed! Well, I won't see him.

LORNA. Oh, you'd better. You can prove to him where they're wrong.

LADY M. No, I can't. He'll confuse me. I have my own way of adding up.

LORNA. Well, it comes out the same.

LADY M. I don't know about that.

LORNA. What?

LADY M. (*quickly*). A professional accountant is trained to make two and two five.

LORNA. It makes me so angry that it's just because you're a woman they think you can't do accounts.

LADY M. Yes. (*Plaintively.*) And that they can frighten me into making mistakes.

LORNA. I told them for the last three weeks we'd been swimming in bazaar accounts: bills in the butter, receipts pinned on to the sofa-cushions; memoranda everywhere.

LADY M. (*whimpering*). I only wish your poor father was alive. It takes a man to deal with these sweeps.

LORNA. Oh no, mamma, I'm sure you can get round anybody. (*Caresses her.*)

LADY M. (*wiping her eyes*). Anybody but an accountant. I never could understand figures!

LORNA (*kisses her*). There now, don't cry. Show me your pretty things.

LADY M. (*opens parcels with one hand, dries her eyes with the other, sobs as she talks*). There's a remnant of brocade—(*sobs*) I bought at the Stores—make a lovely panel (*sobs*) only one pound five. And (*opens parcel*) I've bought the gold purse I've wanted (*sobs*) so long.

LORNA (*looks at it*). Oh, mamma, it must have cost an awful lot!

LADY M. No. It was dirt cheap; only twenty-five guineas. That was sale price, of course. And I didn't forget you. Look at this bangle.

LORNA (*vexed*). But I didn't want a bangle, and it doesn't seem right to buy them when we have so many bills to pay.

LADY M. (*sharply*). If you want credit, and we often do, you must look decent. So I got four new hats.

LORNA. Four?

LADY M. (*quickly*). And I bought you three lovely, blouses, and a dress length of pale blue charmeuse, and two dozen pairs of gloves.

LORNA. I wish you hadn't.

LADY M. (*whimpering*). Don't be ungrateful too.

(*Bell rings.* LADY MARY *starts up.*)

Perhaps that's the man.

LORNA. Well, what if it is?

LADY M. (*agitated*). I can't see him with these red eyes, can I?

LORNA. Why not? If he sees you're worried, it will make him nicer.

LADY M. (*shakes her head*). You don't know what an accountant is!

LORNA. He's a man, I suppose.

LADY M. (*nervous, suddenly becomes confidential*). The fact is, I've got into rather a muddle with these bazaar accounts.

LORNA (*caressingly*). Well, he'll straighten them out for you.

LADY M. (*starts. Dubiously.*) Ye-e-es.

(*Enter* FENNER, *with card on salver.*)

FENNER. A gentleman wishes to see you, my lady.

LADY M. (*takes card nervously, gives slight exclamation of satisfaction*). Show him in.

(*Exit* FENNER.)

(*Goes toward door* C., *speaks with excitement.*) It's that Mr. Calverley White we are always meeting at Mrs. Anstruther's, the grave-looking man who admires you so much.

LORNA (*following her*). What, is he the accountant?

LADY M. Yes. You must see him. Show him. the receipts—and my accounts. There they are. (*Points to basketful of papers on table down* L.) Make the best you can of them. He won't press *you.*

LORNA (*uneasy and distressed*). Oh, mamma, I can't.

LADY M. You *must!*

(*Exit* LADY MARY *up* R. *as door opens at back.*)

(FENNER *enters.*)

FENNER. Mr. White.

(*Enter* CALVERLEY WHITE, *solemn, frock-coated young man, very nervous.*)

CALVERLEY. How do you do, Miss Thornicroft? It's a great pleasure to meet you again.

LORNA (*coldly*). You have come on bus ness, I think.

CALVERLEY. Yes, Sir Bertram Fletcher asked me to call, to help Lady Mary to put her bazaar accounts into proper form.

LORNA (*coldly*). It seems a very unnecessary trouble to take.

CALVERLEY. It was rather a big affair for a lady to manage.

LORNA (*impatiently*). Oh yes, that's always the cry. It seems to me that ladies manage money just as cleverly as men.

CALVERLEY. Oh yes.

LORNA. Especially mamma. Why, she's been on the committee of lots of bazaars.

CALVERLEY (*humbly*). I know.

LORNA. And does all the work, too.

CALVERLEY. Yes.

LORNA. None of the others give anything but their names.

CALVERLEY. No.

LORNA. While she puts her whole soul into it.

CALVERLEY. Yes.

LORNA (*worried*). Oh, please don't go on saying Yes and No like that. What is it you want to see?

CALVERLEY (*meekly*). I want to see Lady Mary.

LORNA. Mamma! I'm afraid you can't to-day. She has scarcely got over the fatigue of the bazaar yet; and the thought of being taken to task for not keeping her accounts in better order has naturally upset her a little.

CALVERLEY (*gently*). I would have done my best to help her with them. (*Going up.*) I'll call another time.

LORNA (*imperiously*). No. We will get it over now. (*Goes to table down* L., *points to basket.*) Here are the bills and memoranda. If you will sit down (*indicates chair at writing-table*) I will hand the papers to you one by one, and explain anything I can.

CALVERLEY (*hesitates*). I would rather wait——

LORNA. We will do it now, please.

CALVERLEY (*hesitates, suddenly begins to pull off gloves, frowning and hardening himself*). If you insist.

(*He sits at table down* L.)

LORNA (*takes basket full of papers, sits* L.C., *a little higher than him.*) What do you want first?

CALVERLEY. First we will take the admissions.

LORNA. Yes. (*Searching*). Here they are. Two thousand and twenty-five admissions at a guinea. That makes——

CALVERLEY. Ah! Forgive me for interrupting you, but here we come to the mistake. We have the number of admissions direct from the men in charge of the turnstiles. They were three thousand four hundred and twelve at a guinea. That makes three thousand five hundred and eighty-two pounds twelve shillings.

LORNA (*puzzled and worried*). Three thousand, do you say? Why, that makes a difference of——

(*Blank pause.*)

(*Hurriedly.*) There's some mistake.

CALVERLEY (*humbly*). That's what I said. That's why I want to see——

LORNA (*interrupts imperiously*). Go on to the next item, please.

CALVERLEY (*humbly*). The sales are given by Lady Mary as amounting to one thousand eight hundred and forty-six pounds eleven shillings and eightpence.

LORNA. Well?

CALVERLEY (*hurriedly*). And the expenses, according to the receipts we have, come to seven hundred and sixty-eight pounds ten shillings and fivepence.

LORNA. Yes. (*Finds paper.*) I have that.

CALVERLEY. The cheque handed to The Cripples' Home was for——

LORNA (*triumphantly*). Two thousand two hundred and seventy-five pounds.

CALVERLEY. Yes. So that, according to us, there's a sum of two thousand three hundred and eighty-five pounds thirteen shillings and threepence unaccounted for.

LORNA (*stupefied*). Two thousand! But that's impossible!

CALVERLEY (*confused*). Of course. It's—forgive the expression, the amateur book-keeping. Now you understand why I must see Lady Mary.

LORNA (*starts up*). Oh, you can't! Poor mamma! No wonder she was worried! *She* couldn't make it right, of course.

CALVERLEY (*rises, gentle but determined*). Perhaps I can help her.

(*They face each other. Pause.*)

LORNA (*fiercely*). What do you mean?

CALVERLEY. I mean that I must see Lady Mary.

(LORNA *almost cowers, keeps her eyes fixed upon him as she steals away* R. *Opens door up* R., *calls hoarsely.*)

LORNA. Mamma, mamma!

LADY M. (*outside, brightly*). Yes, dear?

(*Enter* LADY MARY, *bright, smiling, in elaborate tea gown, sparkling with jewels. She trips in quickly, with out-stretched hand.*)

Oh, Mr. White, I'm so glad you've come to help me with these horrid puzzling figures.

CALVERLEY (*shakes hands, hard, cold, grave*). I will do what I can, Lady Mary.

(LORNA *goes to door up* R.)

LADY M. Don't go away, Lorna. You may help me to remember things.

CALVERLEY. I think we had better talk this over by ourselves, Lady Mary.

LADY M. (*smiles brightly*). I don't. (*To* LORNA.) My dear, you're to stay.

(LORNA, *frightened, reluctant, sits down* R.)

And now for these accounts. (*Sits smiling down* L. *in easy chair.*) What shall we begin with?

CALVERLEY. Your accounts give 2,025 admissions at a guinea. Our information is that there were 3,412.

LADY M. Ah yes, because you reckoned all the admissions, and I reckoned only those that *paid*.

CALVERLEY. I understood that the 3,412 paid.

LADY M. (*laughing*). Oh no. Lots of them slipped through without paying.

CALVERLEY (*incredulous*). What, twelve hundred of them?

LADY M. Yes. You don't know these smart ladies as well as I do.

CALVERLEY. No!

LADY M. Honest as the day in their ordinary life, as soon as it becomes a case of Charity they lose their heads.

CALVERLEY. Yes. Shall we go on to the next point?

LADY R. Oh, yes.

CALVERLEY. The expenses only come to £768 10s. 5*d*.

LADY M. Oh, but those are only the expenses I've got receipts for. There are heaps more besides those.

CALVERLEY. If you will tell me them I will put them down.

LADY M. (*considering*). There are cab fares. Oh, the money we spent upon taxis——

CALVERLEY. What shall we put those down at?

LADY M. Oh, fifty or sixty pounds at least.

(*He writes.*)

At last I found myself spending so much money on them that I hired a car, and when I found that was too expensive I bought one—(*he looks up*) second-hand—all for the bazaar work.

CALVERLEY. How much for that?

LADY M. I don't quite remember. A hundred and seventy-five pounds, I think.

CALVERLEY (*writes*). And what else?

LADY M. (*laughs nervously*). I suppose Sir Bertram will think I went to work rather extravagantly buying the car?

CALVERLEY. Well, he may.

LADY M. But I thought nothing too good for the dear cripples.

CALVERLEY. And what next?

LADY M. (*impatiently*). Oh, how can I remember every little thing? I dropped a half-crown as I took the money from one of the stalls, and there was a bad sovereign in the takings.

(*He waves his hand impatiently.*)

Well, what more do you want to know?

CALVERLEY (*looks at his notes, speaks in a low voice*). I want to know where the money has gone to that

makes the difference between the expenses and the cheque handed to The Cripples' Home on the one hand, and the four thousand six hundred and sixty pounds represented by the admission and sale money, on the other.

LADY M. You must deduct the admissions that didn't pay.

CALVERLEY. I am afraid Sir Bertram won't.

LADY M. Sir Bertram's a beast.

CALVERLEY. Even if we did deduct them, and allow for the taxis and the motor car, there still remains nearly a thousand pounds unaccounted for

LORNA (*below her breath*). A thousand pounds!

LADY M. (*whimpering*). I'm sure I don't know where it's gone. I don't pretend to be very clever at accounts, but I did my best.

CALVERLEY (*encouragingly*). Of course you did. And that is why I came here to help you clear the matter up, instead of——

LADY M. (*sits up*). Instead of what?

CALVERLEY. Letting Sir Bertram communicate with you—through his solicitor.

LADY M. (*starts up*). His solicitor. He dares send you to me with such a message as that!

CALVERLEY. It is not a message, Lady Mary. I only said——

LADY M. (*excited*). You talk to me about solicitors! Well, I shall get my solicitor to write to him, and tell him I mean to start an action for libel at once.

CALVERLEY. But what is the libel?

LADY M. It's a libel not to be satisfied with my accounts. I'm sure I worked myself to death over the beastly bazaar, and you should see the letter of thanks I got from the Secretary of the Cripples' Home. He didn't talk of solicitors and accounts. He was simply delighted. I can show you his letter. (*Opens drawer of desk with excitement.*)

CALVERLEY. But, my dear Lady Mary, that's not the point.

LADY M. I don't care what the point is, I won't be insulted.

LORNA (*who has been looking more and more worried, rises and meets* LADY MARY C.). But mamma, Mr. Calverley is not insulting you. He is only saying——

LADY M. What do you know about it? I wish you wouldn't interfere. It's your sitting there with that stony face that puts me out and makes me give stupid answers.

LORNA. Yes, yes. (*Crosses* LADY MARY.) I'm afraid it is partly my fault, Mr. Calverley.

(*He rises and turns to face her.*)

(*In great pain.*) I've had charge of these accounts (*points to basket*), and I've not been careful enough with them. Do, do please ask Sir Bertram to be lenient.

LADY M. (*hysterical,* R.) Lenient indeed! As if it was his money!

CALVERLEY (*earnestly*). I'm perfectly certain that I can get him to drop the matter, provided the balance of the money is paid at once to him.

LADY M. (*ironically*). To Him—I daresay.

CALVERLEY. Or to the Secretary of the Cripples' Home.

LORNA (*distressed*). What, the two thousand pounds?

CALVERLEY (*earnestly*). Or even—the one thousand.

LADY M. (*laughs hysterically*). One thousand pounds indeed! Why *it's spent,* you fool!

LORNA. Oh! (*Reels back* C. *as if struck.*)

(CALVERLEY *springs to support her.* LORNA *gasping, disengages herself. He stands a moment, his head hanging, she staring at him with wild eyes. He goes up. She intercepts him.*)

Where are you going? (*Pause.*) To Sir Bertram?

CALVERLEY. I must.

LORNA. You are going to tell him that our accounts are imperfect?

CALVERLEY. It has nothing to do with you, Miss Thornicroft.

LORNA. Oh, but it has. I helped my mother.

LADY M. (*sitting* R., *dries her eyes, murmurs*). The dear girl! Of course she did.

CALVERLEY (*impatiently*). Nonsense.

LORNA. Sir Bertram can't accuse the one without the other.

LADY M. (*reassured as* CALVERLEY *looks uneasy*). I should like to see the man dare to accuse either of us.

LORNA. You are going to let two unlucky women suffer for a system which is wrong, a system which puts all the work on people who have been allowed to pay themselves, which throws temptation in the way of people who can't resist it, who, it seems to me, are not even expected to resist it. Mr. Calverley, is it fair?

CALVERLEY (*agitated*). It is Sir Bertram's business, not mine.

LORNA (*passionately*). But you are going to tell him?

LADY M. Why, what's he got to tell? Only that I can't remember how the money's gone.

CALVERLEY (*only heeding* LORNA, *gently*). What can I do?

LORNA (*turns away* L., *breaks down*). I don't know.

CALVERLEY (*springs after her*). Miss Lorna! (*Checks himself, clenching his hands.*)

LADY M. (*watching him, moans*). My poor child's future ruined. (*Goes to window* R.)

LORNA. Mamma, don't.

CALVERLEY (*struggling with himself*). I'll—I'll speak to him. I'll—I'll see what I can do.

LADY M. Oh, thank you, thank you.

CALVERLEY. I'm afraid it will be a difficult business.

LADY M. Oh! (*Turns from window with scared face.*) There's Sir Bertram's car at the door.

LORNA (*indespair*). It's too late.

CALVERLEY. No, no, I'll meet him. I'll— (*Looks earnestly at* LORNA.) I'll do my best.

(*Exit* CALVERLEY *at back hastily.*)

(*Outer door heard to slam.* LORNA, *as if dazed, sinks into chair down* L. *in dumb despair.*)

LADY M. (*recovering herself, looks in the glass, adjusts her hair and dress, takes out powder puff and applies it to her face*). What a ridiculous fuss the creature made! And all about nothing. I'm sure I'll never help a cripple again.

(LORNA *shivers.*)

Why don't you speak? What's the matter with you?

LORNA (*looks at her almost stealthily, with horror in her face*). Matter! Oh, mamma!

LADY M. (*groans*). More heroics!

LORNA. What must he think of me?

LADY M. What on earth does it matter what he thinks? You did just the right thing, taking it upon yourself. Even Sir Bertram wouldn't prosecute you.

LORNA (*shuddering*). What I did was disgraceful, humiliating. I played upon the feeling I know he has for me. It was mean, it was unfair.

LADY M. Anything's fair when one has to get out of a scrape.

LORNA. And how are we ever going to repay the money?

LADY M. Of course we can't repay it, and I don't mean to try. I can't count twopences, like Sir Bertram, whose father was a grocer.

LORNA. We've robbed the cripples of two thousand pounds.

LADY M. (*with weary impatience, recovering her*

playfulness). How can we have robbed them of what they hadn't got ?

LORNA. But they ought to have had it.

LADY M. They were very pleased with what they did get, and after all, they're comfortable for life, and we're not.

LORNA. Mamma, it's horrible to hear you talk like that. To think that the bills were paid with money which wasn't ours !

LADY M. (*sits, closes her eyes*). Well, they are paid, that's the great thing.

LORNA. And that Mr. Calverley looks upon us as thieves !

LADY M. (*with languid haughtiness*). I must beg you not to apply such a word to me.

LORNA. But, mamma——

LADY M. (*laying down the law*). The man who takes a cabbage from a stall without paying for it is a thief. But if you once call a man a thief for taking the highest commission he can get, where are you to stop ?

LORNA. But secret commissions are illegal.

LADY M. As long as they're secret, it doesn't matter what else they are.

LORNA (*desperately*). Mamma, if you feel like that, I suppose it's right—for you. But I can't feel it so. And I can't go on living as if I did.

LADY M. What do you mean ?

LORNA. That I'm going to do typewriting, dressmaking, anything to take myself off your hands.

LADY M. You ungrateful girl ! When all my struggles have been on your account. And now you are going to disgrace yourself, and disgrace me—by earning your own living.

LORNA. Yes.

LADY M. You are absolutely without conscience.

LORNA. We haven't the same sort of conscience, that's all.

LADY M. (*with a huge sigh*). Sneering at your own mother !

LORNA. No, mamma, I'm not sneering. I'm too miserable to do anything so spirited.

(*Bell heard.*)

LADY M. I wonder if it's that awful man again! If it is, you must see him. I simply decline to expose myself again to his impertinence.

LORNA. Mamma, he was not impertinent. He was everything that is courteous and kind.

LADY M. I could see he had a prejudice against me.

LORNA. I don't think so.

LADY M. (*goes to window*). Perhaps it's Sir Bertram. His car is still there.

LORNA. If so, you will have to see him.

LADY M. (*haughtily*). If I do, I shall tell him what I think of him in plain terms.

(*Voices outside.*)

(*Exit* LADY MARY, *frightened, very quickly up* R.)

(*Enter at back* FENNER.)

FENNER. Mr. White.

(*Enter at back* CALVERLEY, *agitated.*)

(*Exit* FENNER.)

CALVERLEY. I hope you will forgive this second intrusion, Miss Lorna.

LORNA (*humble and agitated*). It's no intrusion. You have been interceding for us, I know.

CALVERLEY (*with decision*). Not for you. You have nothing to do with this business.

LORNA. I can't feel that.

CALVERLEY. Except that you would be made to suffer for somebody else's fault.

LORNA. Would be! (*Eagerly.*)

CALVERLEY. Yes. It's all right, I think.

LORNA. And it's your doing, I know. Tell me,

do tell me, how you managed it. (*She points to a seat* C. *and sits* R.)

CALVERLEY (*sits*). It was all arranged more easily than I had expected. Sir Bertram had no wish to be harsh.

LORNA (*bewildered*). But he was coming here himself! That looked bad, I thought.

CALVERLEY. I met him at the door, and, as you see, it didn't take long to prove to him that it would be better not to—not to——

LORNA (*wondering*). What did you say to him?

CALVERLEY (*hesitates*). I hadn't time to say very much.

LORNA. But what did you say—in the time?

CALVERLEY. I can't remember the exact words. But he was satisfied.

LORNA. It's very odd. (*She sits blankly.*) The trouble seems to have come—and gone—like a dream.

CALVERLEY (*rising, rather constrained*). I hope all your troubles may come and go as easily, Miss Lorna.

LORNA (*humble and grateful*). I don't know how to thank you. (*Troubled.*) Somehow—I feel—that you have not told me everything, that you must have had a harder task with Sir Bertram than you admit.

CALVERLEY (*earnestly*). You are wrong. It was settled in a few minutes, as you see.

LORNA (*looking at him steadily*). You say you didn't mention my name?

CALVERLEY. I did not, upon my word.

LORNA (*with increasing suspicion*). You only had to say a few words, and he was satisfied?

CALVERLEY. He grumbled a little, but decided to let the matter drop.

LORNA (*looks at him askance, becomes suddenly frightened and shy*). Oh, yes—I—I—I—see.

CALVERLEY (*after a pause, looking at his hat*). I suppose I shan't have the pleasure of seeing you again till the Autumn. You will be going away to Ostend, I understand?

LORNA (*turns away*). I was going, but I am not going now.

CALVERLEY (*interested*). Not going? Lady Mary told me, a fortnight ago, that I should meet you there.

LORNA. I've changed my mind.

CALVERLEY (*looks at her, moves away, then back. In earnest whisper*). May I know why?

LORNA (*in a voice full of suppressed feeling*). I don't feel justified in letting my mother incur--difficulties for my sake.

CALVERLEY (*sharply*). It's not for your sake.

LORNA. So I'm going to earn my own living.

CALVERLEY (*eagerly*). How?

LORNA. I don't know yet. As a last resource there is always the tea-shop.

CALVERLEY (*in better spirits*). Yes, yes.

LORNA. So when you come back from Ostend, perhaps I shall have the pleasure of serving you with tea and bread and butter. No gratuities.

CALVERLEY. I'm not going to Ostend either.

LORNA (*after a pause, sharply*). Why not?

CALVERLEY. Can't afford it.

LORNA. But a fortnight ago you said you were going.

CALVERLEY. Many things may happen in a fortnight.

LORNA (*apprehensive, imperatively*). What sort of things?

CALVERLEY (*looks down*). Oh, one may lose money.

LORNA. How?

CALVERLEY. On horses, or at cards, or on the Stock Exchange.

LORNA. Do you mean that you have lost in any of those ways?

CALVERLEY. Why—— (*Hesitating*)—no, I—I don't know that I have.

LORNA (*pressing*). But you have lost it suddenly?

CALVERLEY. Yes.

LORNA. Very suddenly?

CALVERLEY. The fact is, I've been rather extravagant.

LORNA. Extravagant! Extravagant! (*A wild look comes into her face, she comes down quickly* L.) Oh!! (*Turns sharply.*) You'd never be so mad, so foolish! Oh, no, no! (*covers her face with her hands, throws herself in chair.*)

CALVERLEY (*comes slowly down to her—in a voice full of tenderness*). What's the matter?

LORNA (*rises, crosses* R. *in violent agitation*). Oh, no no, I won't allow it, I won't, I won't! Mamma—— (*Runs up* R.)

CALVERLEY (*puts down his hat, seizes her hand*). What won't you allow? Come now?

LORNA (*passionately*). I won't allow you to waste your own money on saving us. Even if you were very rich, I couldn't allow it.

(*He tries to interrupt.*)

No. Don't deny it. I know that's what you meant to do.

CALVERLEY. How did you guess? I didn't mean you to.

LORNA. Nothing but the money would have satisfied Sir Bertram, I know.

CALVERLEY. Well, Sir Bertram must be satisfied, don't you realize that?

LORNA. But not with your money?

CALVERLEY. Why not, if I give it willingly?

LORNA. But you don't. It was wheedled out of you, wrung out of you, by the pleadings, the tears, of two selfish women, who thought of nothing but how to get themselves out of the scrape they found themselves in.

CALVERLEY. No, no!

LORNA. I'm ashamed of my own share in persuading you. But how could I guess how generous you were? How could I imagine you were ready to

sacrifice hundreds of pounds just because you saw a woman cry?

CALVERLEY (*in a stifled voice*). I'm not. I could see a dozen women cry without turning a hair. If I couldn't stand the sight of one crying, it was because —because——

LORNA (*in a whisper*). Because what?

CALVERLEY. Because it was *you*. (*Pause.*) Now you understand. (*Goes up.*)

LORNA (*looking down, in a low voice.*) Mr. Calverley.

CALVERLEY (*comes down*). Yes.

LORNA (*slowly*). I—don't—think—that's—a—reason.

CALVERLEY. Well, it's reason enough for me, anyhow.

LORNA (*in a low voice, meekly*). I can't let you do it, you know.

CALVERLEY. Well, if I choose to, it's my look-out, isn't it?

LORNA (*still looking down*). No.

CALVERLEY (*stands straight before her*). Do you forbid me to do it?

(*She looks up shyly.*)

If it will give me very great pleasure? (*He puts his hand on her shoulder.*) Do you forbid me—Lorna?

LORNA (*puts up her hand to his, and bends her head*). No.

CALVERLEY (*takes her face in his hand*). Do you forbid me?

LORNA. No.

CALVERLEY (*kisses her, takes her left hand, plays with the third finger*). Do you forbid me?

LORNA. No.

CALVERLEY. It will be better than the tea-shop.

(LADY MARY *heard singing outside*).

LORNA (*starts back*). Oh, won't it be awkward to meet mamma, and explain?

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CALVERLEY. Awkward! Not for *her*.

(*Enter* LADY MARY *up* R.)

LADY M. Ah, Mr. White, back again, I see. (*Holds out her hand graciously.*) I *knew* you'd see it was all right when you had time to look into it.

LORNA. Oh, mamma—but——

LADY M. Don't interrupt me, my dear. (*To* CALVERLEY.) A nice exposure it would have been for everybody, with half a dozen duchesses on the committee!

CALVERLEY. Yes.

LORNA. Mamma, you don't understand——

LADY M. (*quickly*). I think I do. (*To* CALVERLEY.) You wish to marry my Lorna?

CALVERLEY. Yes. I——

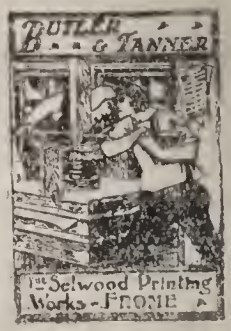
LADY M. (*interrupts graciously*). And you're afraid I won't let you, after the scene you made here this morning.

LORNA (*indignant*). Oh. I can't let you——

CALVERLEY. Hush!

LADY M. Well, I'm more forgiving than you think. I won't ask for any apologies, in fact, I won't listen to any. I consent to let the past be forgotten, and (*takes their hands and laughingly joins them*) to say in the orthodox way (*with humorous affectation*) ber-less yeou, my children!

CURTAIN.



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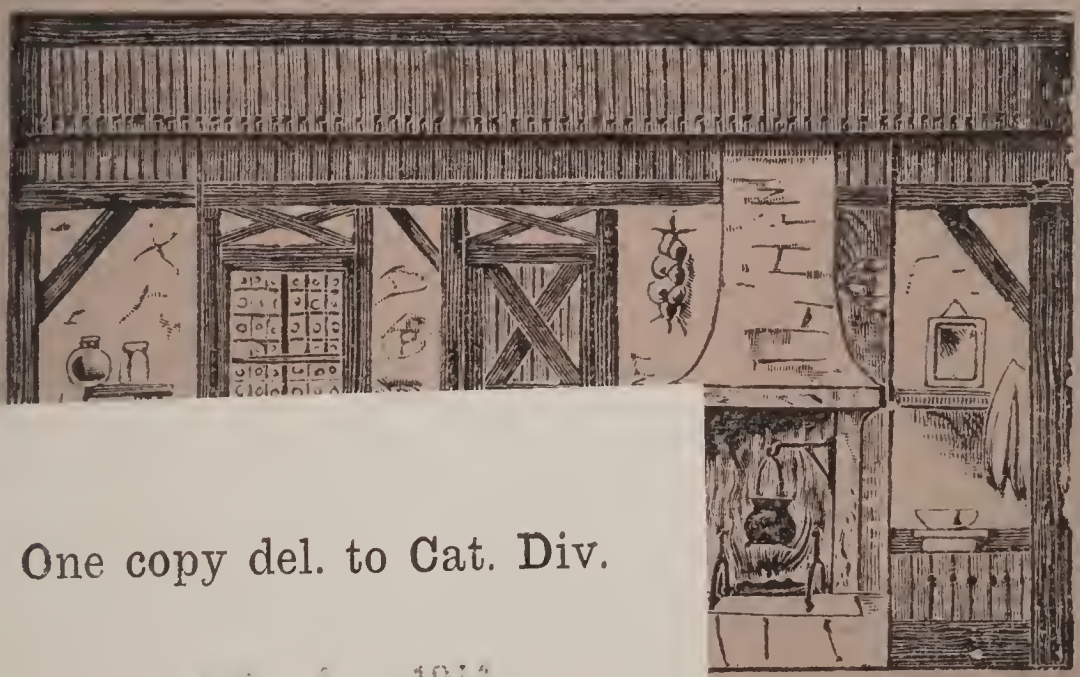

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